

# Town Meeting

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BULLETIN OF AMERICA'S TOWN MEETING OF THE AIR

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## Should Immigration to Israel Be Restricted?

Moderator, **GEORGE V. DENNY, Jr.**

### *Speakers*

**ISRAEL ROKACH**

**DAVID HOROWITZ**

**CARL HERMAN VOSS**

**KENNETH BILBY**

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### COMING

— August 30, 1949 —

**Does the Arab World Need a Marshall Plan?**

— September 6, 1949 —

**How Can We Advance Democracy in Asia?**

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The Broadcast of August 23, 1949, over the American Broadcasting Company network from 8:30 to 9:30 p.m., EDT, was a rebroadcast of the program which originated in Tel Aviv, Israel, on August 1.



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# Town Meeting

BULLETIN OF AMERICA'S TOWN MEETING OF THE AIR

GEORGE V. DENNY, JR., MODERATOR



AUGUST 23, 1949

VOL. 15, No. 17

## Should Immigration to Israel Be Restricted?

**Moderator Denny:**

Good evening, neighbors. Tonight we invite you to join us in the west national capital of one of the oldest countries in the world.

Tel Aviv, like other national capitals, is not truly representative of the new state of Israel except in the pride, energy, and amazing vitality of its people.

Fortunately, our host committee, headed by the Town Clerk of Tel Aviv, had the foresight to take our Town Hall party on two extensive trips over the country the first two days we were here. We visited Rehovoth, the center of the thriving citrus industry, which provides Israel with its most important export business. We were then taken through the famous Weizmann Research Institute, whose work is providing the foundation for present and future agricultural and industrial development.

In the north, we visited collective and coöperative farm communities which are progressing side by side with individual free enterprise. Of course, we visited Jerusalem, Nazareth, the Sea of Galilee, and went into the mouth of the Jordan River.

On each trip, we saw the immigrant camps overflowing with people who have known poverty and oppression in other lands and who have come to help build this new nation of unrestricted immigration.

Unrestricted immigration is a cornerstone on which this nation is built. But some of its warmest friends and supporters are now wondering how long they can keep up this tremendous pace of a nation of 860,000 people trying to absorb upwards of 30,000 new people each month of all ages and stages of wealth and health—the oppressed and poor of every land. It has been hailed by many as the most courageous social experiment of this century, and so it



seems to those of us who have had the opportunity to see w these brave-hearted, generous people themselves are doing w the waves of immigrants who are landing daily on their sho

Our speakers can give you only a glimpse of this picture in time at our disposal, but there is no iron curtain here, and drama that is being enacted every day in this land of prom richly deserves the world-wide attention it's receiving.

It should be understood by all that in questioning the pre policy of unrestricted immigration in Israel, our speakers doing so with the highest respect and appreciation for those v believe the present policy should be maintained come what m

Our first speaker is a trained observer who has witnessed birth of Israel and who believes that the policy of unrestrict immigration should be re-examined in the light of existing c ditions. He is Mr. Kenneth Bilby, a representative here of *New York Herald-Tribune*. He is a native of the state of Ariz and a student of political science both at the University of Ariz and Columbia, who rose to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in late war. I take pleasure in presenting Mr. Kenneth Bilby. Bilby. (*Applause*)

### **Mr. Bilby:**

In 15 months of statehood, Israel increased its population nearly one third. The ingathering of a quarter million immigrants from every continent on earth fulfilled the dreams of the m ardent Zionist. At last, a home had been found for the survivors of Hitler's brutality.

But now the time has come to evaluate the impact of this g immigrant wave upon the youngest state in the world. Has it impeded or stimulated Israel's growth?

Has it aided the country's industrial and its agricultural velopment, or has it been a drain on a previously inflated econo

The answer, I feel, can be found in even the most curs examination of living conditions and employment opportuni of the immigrants. More than a quarter of them are still in ree tion camps at Port Hassanah, at Sarafand, and at Haifa. They live in tents with primitive sanitary facilities, or they bake wooden barracks, sometimes 40 to a room. Their average s is six months. By no stretch of the imagination can these ca be called an improvement on the old DP camps of Europe Cyprus.

When they finally are assigned a home, it is often a vac Arab mud hut. Running water or even electricity are luxu

As for employment, a once-skilled European factory wo

en winds up tending a depleted orange grove. My friend Mr. rowitz pointed with pride last week to the fact that 175,000 migrants had found employment and were, therefore, assimilated. I challenge his figures. Vast numbers of these have two or three days of piece work per week at jobs entirely alien to their training and background.

For several months, hundreds of unemployed have staged daily demonstrations in Israel's large cities. There have been fights with the police. The gates of Parliament were stormed just last week. The clashes have produced injuries.

An enormous volume of bitterness has developed among new citizens. The most serious effect has been psychological. Through years of confinement these people dreamed of the promised land—all land of milk and honey. What they find are more camps, more separations.

Some of my Israeli friends tell me they have written off the present generation of immigrants as potential contributors to the building of the state.

The great influx following statehood was understandable and desirable. It showed the world that the promise of a Jewish homeland was being fulfilled. But now the time has come to face reality. This unchecked immigrant flow must be restricted, although not halted.

The national housing program is years behind the present demand. The physical resources of the country cannot be developed commensurately with job needs if the economy is crushed under succeeding waves of immigration.

Israel still lives in a hostile Moslem world. It desperately needs internal stability. It needs an enthusiastic and united populace to stimulate its infant industries, to pioneer its southern desert, to bring life back to its vast citrus tracts. It will not find this spirit as its new citizen reservoir is subjected to further months or years of poverty and disillusionment.

Last week, in Jaffa, I visited a Polish immigrant girl, six months in Israel. The numbers of Auschwitz concentration camp were tattooed on her arm. Her parents, brothers, and sisters died in gas chambers. For years she dreamed of a new life here. Today she is jammed in a small room with five other girls. She earns \$60 monthly as a house servant. Her wardrobe consists of a few ragged dresses. She is engaged, but cannot marry because not even a room, much less a home, can be found. In her own words, she is miserable and unhappy.

It is an unfortunate fact that she will continue to be so unless



the government moves to restrict immigration. Only then will be able to concentrate on its most vital task of salvaging the human resources now at hand. (*Applause*)

### **Moderator Denny:**

Thank you, Mr. Kenneth Bilby. Our next speaker has lived in Palestine for more than 29 years. He is Director General of the Finance Ministry of the State of Israel, has represented the Jewish case at Lake Success, and now head of Israeli delegation in current financial talks with Great Britain. I am pleased to present to this audience, Mr. David Horowitz. Mr. Horowitz. (*Applause*)

### **Mr. Horowitz:**

You, Mr. Bilby, have discussed most eloquently the conditions in transit camps in Israel. I have my own personal experience of life in tents and huts of the kind described by you for several years in these countries. I have never regretted these experiences, although I don't belittle the hardship and suffering involved in such life.

But Mr. Bilby, don't forget that the people of this country sacrificed blood and treasure, food and life for immigration. It is for them the national ideal of salvation and the human ideal of rescue. Immigration is the purpose and sense of their national life; an inspiration of their personal lives.

Restriction of immigration would be a mockery of their struggle for the last 30 years. Restriction would have to be enforced by the state and lead to a clash with Jews trying to reach the shores of this country with or without visa. This is unthinkable.

Economically, there is hardly a case for restriction. If immigration had been restricted in every instance of economic difficulty in the past, we wouldn't be here and there would have been no state of Israel. The difficulty is not insolvable.

There may be some 90,000 immigrants in camps and unemployed. These have not yet been absorbed. But some 160,000 have been more or less integrated in the life of this country.

We always knew that the resettlement wouldn't be smooth and easy, but full of hardship and suffering. But wouldn't these people have suffered more in the DP camps of Berchtesgaden or in the slums of Morocco?

I met an old woman in a camp in Israel. I asked her how things are. She answered, "Was it better in Germany? Here, instead of suffering and grief, there are compensations of freedom and human dignity."

Immigration is self-regulating. If life becomes intolerable, thousands of letters are flying to all corners of the world and the would-be immigrants know the state of affairs and wait until conditions improve.

Immigration was self-regulating in this way in America for a century, and thus a glorious civilization of a whole continent was reared.

The people of this country, faced with the choice to lower their standards of life or to restrict immigration, would choose to raise their standards.

Anyhow, immigration itself is a driving, creative economic force. It expands the market for goods and services, and that stimulates production and construction, attracts capital and skills. History shows that the Puritans and Huguenots, Jewish and other refugees established new thriving industries all over the world. In the sixteenth century, Sir Walter Raleigh brought to what is United States of America several hundred men. They spent there two years and returned to England. The few hundred did not support themselves in what is today the richest nation in the world. Should immigration have been restricted then?

Production and construction in Israel are expanding. New investments of capital create employment. It is true there is still lack of economic development behind the flow of immigration and it causes much misery and suffering. But new construction is catching up with the increase in population. The absorption of new immigrants is mainly a function of economic, political, and human factors, and these can be conditioned.

This country, its economy and achievements, are the gifts of immigration. Immigration to Israel cannot be restricted. (Applause)

### **Moderator Denny:**

Thank you, Mr. Horowitz. Our next speaker, who is chairman of the Executive Council of the American-Christian Palestine Committee, has shown by his works his friendship for the people of Israel, but finds himself today questioning this policy of unrestricted immigration. Dr. Carl Herman Voss is a Congregational minister who's traveled widely in the United States and abroad, and is a member of the faculty of the New School for Social Research in New York City. He's here this summer in charge of a group of New York University students studying conditions here in Israel. I take pleasure in presenting Dr. Carl Herman Voss. Voss. (Applause)

## Dr. Voss:

Israel licked the British; Israel licked the Arabs; and Israel will lick the problems of immigration. Of that, I am convinced (*Applause*)

Mr. Bilby, you are more doubtful and, Mr. Horowitz, you have your own brand of certainty. My views differ from those of both of you in this respect: I have no doubt about Israel's ability to handle vast numbers of immigrants, but immigration to Israel must certainly and inevitably be curtailed unless the following problems are solved.

First, the standard of living will have to be measurably lowered far beyond the present not insignificant restrictions. Mr. Horowitz says he has no objections and assures us that the people of Israel stand ready to tighten their belts.

I would remind Mr. Horowitz, however, that you Israelis have not laid down a real austerity program. You have not applied authentic restrictions on luxuries and comfort. You have not yet imposed stringent rationing so that *all* may share and *none* may want.

Are you willing to have austerity, more austerity, and still more austerity?

If so, there need be little worry about immigration; but if not, then immigration will, it seems to me, have to be limited to some extent.

Secondly, you have the problem of nonselection of immigrants. You have been more than kind and considerate in accepting all who thronged to your shores. No Jew is barred—not even the lame and the halt and the blind. But how can your nation expect to build soundly and to produce abundantly when burdened with such staggering problems of physical and mental health? Believe me, Hadassah's medical organization will have its hands full. Incurables, for example, could receive better care at less expense for the time being in the countries where they still reside and where economic hardships are not as taxing as here.

Immigrants who are not carefully selected, who are physically and mentally ill, and who have not had any education for life in Israel would impair your industrial productivity and your agricultural efficiency. Such immigration can be a liability rather than an asset.

Thirdly, you Israelis must secure sufficient financial aid to handle this stupendous flow of immigration. You will need to understand, about two billion dollars in loans, investments, and gifts to meet your economic demands as a growing country. Un-



you secure such a sum, you will have to apply brakes to your immigration.

Thus far, you have received only 100 million dollars as a loan and 60 million dollars during the first half of 1949 as investments. Perhaps you have not as yet made investment possibilities secure and attractive enough. As for gifts, generous though they have been, they are not enough.

You must tell this story of immigration to your friends, both Jewish and Christian. I agree with Mr. Bilby that the world knows too little about the crisis of immigration in your national life. Do your fellow Jews throughout the world know about it? Doubt it! The world at large certainly fails to realize that this is not a Jewish problem alone.

The world must learn that it is in reality an international problem in which all nations share responsibility. The major task ahead of you, it seems to me, is that of dramatizing the plight of our tens of thousands of immigrants who languish jobless and bitter and despondent month after month in those crowded, insanitary reception centers.

If you can obtain the necessary financial assistance in terms of loans, investments, and gifts, then I would gladly withdraw this particular objection to unrestricted immigration. I say all this as one who has been for many years, as you know, an avowed Christian friend of Zionism and as one who covets for Israel a unique position in the Middle East as a cultural and economic influence for democracy and against totalitarianism whether of the left or right.

I, therefore, urge the curtailing — not the stoppage, but the curtailing—and careful control in regulation of your immigration. In any case, problems or not, curtailed immigration or otherwise, as an American and as a non-Jew, have only admiration for the zeal and the determination that you manifest in your new state of Israel—this newest republic in the world—the only genuine democracy in the entire Middle East. (*Applause*)

#### **Moderator Denny:**

Thank you, Mr. Voss. The Mayor of Tel Aviv, Israel Rokach, hails from one of the oldest Jewish families in this country. His father founded the thriving citrus industry, and although Mayor Rokach himself was trained as an electrical engineer, he has been Mayor of the city since 1936 and has been actively interested in its growth and development for 26 years. He's a member of the Parliament, and is one of the most respected figures in all Israel. Just before we went on the air, I had the pleasure of presenting

to Mayor Rokach on behalf of our Town Hall listeners our Town Hall Scroll with the names and addresses of thousands of American citizens who made our world tour possible. Now it gives me very great pleasure to present the Mayor of this city, Mayor Israel Rokach of Tel Aviv. (*Applause*)

### **Mayor Rokach:**

Restriction, dear Mr. Bilby, has been for centuries a word of ill fame for the Jewish people. It started from the Ghetto with all the dark shades of human life, including restrictions of residence, restrictions in business, in studies, and so on. Restriction on friends, by force is an anathema for us.

With the Jewish renaissance in Palestine, restrictions were given many explanations and excuses. Under the Turkish regime because of their foreign passports, Jews were not allowed to land in Jaffa harbor, and were forbidden from buying land and building houses in their own names, and even from erecting schools and buildings.

Then came the Balfour Declaration with international recognition of the right of the Jewish people to build its own national home in their ancient homeland. But very soon after the first outbreak of disturbances and connivance with the British authorities, restrictions again appeared, making the establishment of the Jewish national home dependent on the economic absorptive capacity of the country.

Then by political considerations, through further restriction of the already small area of Palestine, the infamous White Paper left only one-fifth of the country open to free colonization and it reduced the numerous clauses of the number to be allowed into the country. The idea of partitioning the country cropped up, too.

Against all these conceptions of restrictions, the Jewish people within Palestine and throughout the world fought constantly and courageously. They even agreed to become "thieves in the night" when starting the settlement in a prohibited area and when landing refugees on moonless nights on the shores of Tel Aviv. Palestinian Jewry fought on this score with the police, with the army, and suffered endless days of curfew which paralyzed economic life, disrupted communications, and its leaders spent weeks and months behind barbed wire in the concentration camps at Latrun, Athlit, and elsewhere.

Now, at last, when the Jewish state has become a reality and many-generation-long dream has become a fact, who would dare to affix to our colors the stigma of the so-much-hated restriction?

immigration, of holding back the surge of people straining to leave the country and the camp and soil of hated Germany and take their part in the rebuilding of our country, its state, and its language?

The danger is no longer in the centuries-long restriction on entry into Palestine, for the gates of Zion shall remain widely open to every Jew who wishes to live freely in Israel. The danger today is the restriction of Jews leaving the different countries, and the dispersion for these shores.

Russia, since its revolution, prohibited its citizens from leaving that country and thus restricted immigration of Jews from there. The same policy is being followed by all states under Soviet influence. In these countries, the great masters of the remnants of European Jewry are hopelessly imprisoned.

In other countries, where this is not so, Jews are prevented from taking with them their capital, their worldly goods, their industrial equipment. Paradoxically, the Jew, who in the past was a pariah to be hounded out, is now forbidden from leaving the countries of provisional states and from making his way to the new wide-open gates of Zion.

The struggle of world Jewry now is to bring about the relaxation of these restrictions and to open the way to Israel for those Jews who see their physical and spiritual salvation within the framework of this state. This, friend Bilby, should be the motto and aim of all peace-minded and progressive people independent even of the conditions our co-worker, Dr. Voss, thinks necessary under existing circumstances. (*Applause*)

### **Moderator Denny:**

Thank you, Mayor Rokach. Now before we take the questions from our audience, we'd like to have some questions from two members of our Town Hall Seminar who are acting as special interrogators for this meeting, Mr. George Wilson representing the American Farm Bureau Federation, and Mr. Robert Hanson representing the Fraternal Order of Eagles. We're going to start with a question from our friend Mr. Wilson who hails from the great state of California, so much like the new state of Israel.

**Mr. Wilson:** Thank you, Mr. Denny. Mr. Horowitz, it's in a spirit of great admiration that I ask how is Israel going to continue unrestricted immigration and still meet its high living and production costs, to attract new capital, and to prevent the necessity of nationalistic barriers which will encourage counter measures from neighbor states, thus hampering the desired peace and the elevating influence of Israel in the Near East?



# THE SPEAKERS' COLUMN

**CARL HERMAN VOSS** — Dr. Voss, a Congregational minister, is a member of the faculty of the New School for Social Research in New York City. This summer he is in charge of a group of students who are studying conditions in Israel. Because of his friendship for the people of Israel, he is a member of the Executive Council of the American-Christian Palestine Committee.

**ISRAEL ROKACH** — Mayor of Tel Aviv since 1936, Israel Rokach is a member of one of the oldest Jewish families in the community. His father founded the citrus industry. Mayor Rokach, himself, was trained as an electrical engineer, but has been actively interested in the growth and development of his city for 26 years. He is a member

of the Parliament and one of the most respected figures of all Israel.

**KENNETH BILBY** — Mr. Bilby, a native of Arizona, was a student of political science at the University of Arizona and at Columbia. During the war he rose to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and is now in Palestine as a representative of the *New York Herald Tribune*.

**DAVID HOROWITZ** — Mr. Horowitz, who has lived in Palestine for more than 29 years, is Director General of the Finance Ministry of the State of Israel. He has represented the Jewish case at the United Nations, and is now head of the Israeli delegation of current financial talks with Great Britain.

**Mr. Denny:** Thank you, Mr. Wilson. Mr. Horowitz?

**Mr. Horowitz:** The way is to increase productivity. Cost of production doesn't depend upon the standard of life. Countries with a higher standard of life compete in a world market if they increase productivity. We are going the same way. (*Applause*)

**Mr. Denny:** Thank you, Mr. Horowitz. Now, Mr. Robert Hansen of Milwaukee.

**Mr. Hansen:** I should like to ask either Dr. Voss or Ken Bilby whether, if all of the nations of the West share the responsibility for meeting the problems of the immigrants who come to Israel in view of the difficulties here, would it not be better for the western nations to share a little more with Israel the moral leadership and actual responsibility for meeting the problems of Jewish and other refugees in countries that still have lots of land and job opportunities?

**Mr. Bilby:** I think I can perhaps best answer that by a personal illustration. A recently returned Jewish agency leader from Germany reported to me last week that the visa situation to the United States for Jews in the camps of Germany is considerably eased. But he said the very unique thing was that the great bulk of them still wanted to come to Israel, even though the opportunity to go to the United States from Germany existed.

**Mr. Denny:** Thank you. I believe Mr. Voss has a comment on that. Mr. Voss?

**Mr. Voss:** It should be added, Mr. Denny, that of the millions of displaced persons in Europe after the war, only 23 per cent were Jews, and of those, 95 per cent wanted to go to Israel with singular unanimity. The other Jews who have been wanting to come here are not, strictly speaking, displaced persons, but simply

who want to come from a deep-seated and ancient religious cultural longing. Of the necessity of granting land to them, is no question, because Israel has ample room for those grants. (*Applause*)

**Denny:** All right. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Voss. George n has a question.

**Wilson:** I would like to ask either Mr. Horowitz or the r, how can Israel maintain maximum incentives to pro- on on communal farms, placing no dependence on the profit e?

**Denny:** Ah, there you are, Mr. Horowitz, Finance Minister.

**Horowitz:** There are two kinds of incentives—the individual tive of making progress and becoming wealthy as far as ole, and the feeling of collective responsibility. In the collec- settlements, we are trying to substitute the incentive of dual gain by the incentive of collective responsibility. It is periment which has very well succeeded. (*Applause*)

**Denny:** Thank you, Mr. Horowitz. Now, Bob Hansen again.

**Hansen:** A question for the Mayor. As a part of providing ole and secure environment for its people, does the Israeli nment plan an old-age and social security program, and will possible to integrate the present labor-union-sponsored ers' sick, assistance, and unemployment funds with such a public and social security program?

**Denny:** Mr. Mayor, are you thinking that far ahead?

**Mayor Rokach:** As soon as we have passed the transitional d of rebuilding the peace, I am certain that the first thing program of the government will be to bring into this country security against unemployment and against sickness, and for her social purposes. (*Applause*)

**Denny:** Thank you, Mayor Rokach. Now, before we take uestions from the members of our audience, let's pause y for an announcement.

**Emeny:** This is Brooks Emeny, president of the Foreign y Association and member of the Town Hall World Seminar. re is one impression which this flying world tour of ours mphasized, it is the overwhelming importance of America's n world affairs—not that this was not already self-evident, omehow the actual daily witnessing of the effects of our es abroad has a very sobering lesson to bring.

ry aspect of our policies, whether domestic or foreign, has -wide repercussions. It is the awareness of this fact on the of other peoples which gives them constant concern as to

what Americans think and may decide to do. It also underlines the supreme importance of the education of American citizens, the problems of other countries and the relation of our power and wealth to their solution.

The very success of our foreign policy depends upon an enlightened public opinion. There are many means of contributing of course, to this end. But, fundamentally, it is the task of the leadership of each community to organize the means whereby every school child and every voter can better understand the essential elements involved in our international decisions.

The Foreign Policy Association is, of course, dedicated to the very purpose of helping communities. We not only show how such educational programs can be organized, but we provide publications dealing with all phases of world affairs. Every citizen needs what the Association can give. Every citizen is welcome to participate in our work.

Now for the question period, we return you to Mr. Denny.

## QUESTIONS, PLEASE!

*Mr. Denny:* Now, we're going to have the opportunity of hearing questions from the people of this new state of Israel who have come here from all parts of the world. They may come in Hebrew as well as English, and they'll be translated immediately. We start with the young man in uniform right there in the aisle.

*Man:* I'd like to ask Mr. Bilby. It is difficult enough to absorb thousands of Jewish immigrants who support our state. Should we also be expected to accept Arab emigres who fought against us?

*Mr. Denny:* Mr. Bilby?

*Mr. Bilby:* I think that's a rather broad question that goes into a political discussion which is now on the agenda at Lausanne. I don't think it's quite pertinent to the question of what has got to be done with immigration as far as the Jews themselves are concerned.

*Mr. Denny:* Perhaps that question ought to go to one or two of the other speakers. Do either one of you want to handle the question? No, they shake their heads. All right. You didn't have to. Next question from the other side.

*Man:* Mr. Horowitz. Here's a question which I think is very pertinent to having to absorb the immigrants. How can the government encourage the investment of private capital, which



the same time some of its ministers\* talk about the establishment of a socialist state in Israel?

*Mr. Horowitz:* We are living in a democratic state, and everybody has the right to express his opinions and his views about the future of this country. But what is important for capital which is to be invested in this country is, of course, what are the legal and practical legislative measures that you are going to adopt, what is administrative practice with regard to investment of foreign capital. This is directed completely to facilitating and increasing investment of new capital through various facilities, such as in the field of taxation, customs tariff, and transmission in foreign currency of profit and dividends gained in this country.

*Mr. Denny:* Thank you. Now, the question from over here.

*Mr. Voss:* Mr. Voss. What do you think of the prospects for Jewish immigration to Israel from the United States?

*Mr. Voss:* At the present time, Jewish immigration from the United States to Israel is lamentably weak. There should be, I believe, an immigration from the United States of several thousands, perhaps several tens of thousands, who would make stalwart young American pioneers in Israel to provide, I think, the muscle of brawn and brains of which Israel has need. So many immigrants have been coming here physically and mentally depleted, that I think that America owes it to the new state of Israel to provide a strong bulwark to help these new immigrants who come from Europe. (*Applause*)

*Mr. Denny:* Thank you. Next question.

*Mr. Horowitz:* Mr. Horowitz. How will the understaffed, underpaid, under-equipped, and undertrained Israel police force, and the welfare agencies be able to cope properly with the social dilemmas of unselected immigration?

*Mr. Horowitz:* Of course, I explained in my initial statement we didn't expect the process of absorption and transplantation of the population in this country to be a very easy task. We'll have difficulties—not only of economics, but also of another character. We have to deal with them as we dealt with much more difficult problems in the year of 1948, and we have overcome them against all expectations. I believe that whatever difficulties are inherent in these tasks, they are not much more difficult than those which were successfully handled in 1948, and in the first month of the year 1949. (*Applause*)

*Mr. Denny:* Thank you. There's a question from another member of our Seminar, Mrs. Buck.

The questioner has written us saying that, by his use of the term "ministers," he meant members of the Kneset (Parliament).

*Mrs. Buck:* I'd like to ask Mayor Rokach this question. As the country of Israeli, which of course is not large, becomes completely inhabited through unrestricted immigration, won't Israel become a serious threat to its neighbors in its need for expansion?

*Mr. Denny:* Mr. Rokach? (*Pause*) The Mayor's thinking that one over, apparently.

*Mayor Rokach:* Well, it is a very curious question. First of all, we have plenty of room yet for millions of people to come here, and, I think, the more numerous we are, the better it will be for the neighbors. Of the country, there is no need of thinking of a threat to others. We want to build up peacefully this country. (*Applause*)

*Mr. Denny:* Thank you. The gentleman back there.

*Man:* Mr. Bilby. How does Mr. Bilby envisage the cultivation of the Negeb without an ever-increasing stream of immigrants?

*Mr. Bilby:* Well, in the first place, I don't anticipate that the stream is going to be cut off. I'm sure, at the present time, that if I were to say I would like to see immigration restricted to 5,000 per month, instead of the 30,000 it was a short time before, that Mr. Horowitz would agree with me—if I used the word "regulated," instead of the word "restricted."

As Mr. Rokach, the Mayor, pointed out in his speech, this word "restricted" is the thing that is causing the big debate. It's a distasteful word to you people, because of the long historical tragedies which are associated with it. But by restricting, by cutting down, does not for a second mean that you're going to cut off your development programs in the Negeb. You're going to go on your feet when you have a little breathing spell. When you get these people properly oriented and assimilated, then I'm sure your development program will go far faster than it could otherwise. (*Applause*)

*Mr. Denny:* Thank you. The young lady in the blue dress the other day. (*Question in Hebrew*)

*Mr. Denny:* Thank you. Now we're going to have to call on our interpreter.

*Interpreter:* I'm afraid that I'm going to save Mr. Bilby a repetition. He has not been asked a question. The lady declared openly her name and that of her colleagues that "just as we reached the present stage without recourse to arms, really, so with the help of God Almighty, we shall keep the gates of this country open." (*Applause*)

*Mr. Denny:* Thank you. Thank the young lady. Yes, this gentleman.

n: Perhaps Mr. Horowitz and Mayor Rokach would like to  
er in answer to this question. How long do you think it will  
ire to integrate the present camp population and find  
er homes for them?

r. Denny: How long will it take to integrate the present camp  
lation?

r. Horowitz: I wouldn't take it on myself to predict. If I would  
prophet, I wouldn't be a director of the Finance Ministry.  
(daughter)

r. Denny: Mayor Rokach. Would you comment?

Mayor Rokach: Well, I remember that 22 years ago when we  
4,000 unemployed in the population of about 250,000 Jews in  
stine, we thought how long will it take to get rid of the 4,000.  
that we are about 900,000 and have about 60,000 in the camps,  
ody who knows about arithmetic can make the calculation.

r. Denny: All right. Thank you, very much. There is a lady  
e aisle here.

dy: I'm Mrs. Izler Solomon from Columbus, Ohio. What is  
suggestion, Mr. Voss, to the Jewish and Christian Zionists  
e United States in helping the immigration problem in Israel?

r. Voss: I think the first thing that has to be done is to tell  
Jews and Christians of this immigration crisis in the national  
of Israel. I think certainly there is a great need for even larger  
than have come before. If those two things—understanding  
generosity—are forthcoming, they are a tremendous contri-  
on to be made to alleviate this problem.

r. Denny: Thank you. Let's take this gentleman right here.

n: This question is addressed to Mr. Bilby. As a matter of  
ess and justice, isn't absorption of some admitted 500,000  
s, who are entitled to return, an essential problem to be  
at the same time as Jewish immigration?

r. Bilby: No, I don't think by any means it is necessarily con-  
ed. In the first place, you're presupposing that 500,000 Arabs  
coming back. But I think most of the audience would argue  
you a bit on that. Certainly, any Arabs that do come back  
come as part of a peace treaty. When that peace treaty  
come, no one knows at the present time. In the meantime, the  
f assimilating this Jewish immigration which is still coming  
imminent one and has to go forward unrelated to any possible  
return to Israel. (Applause)

r. Denny: Thank you. The gentleman over there.

n: I'd like to ask Mr. Rokach how many Jews, and from what  
tries and why, have left Israel for the countries from which  
came during this last year.



*Mr. Denny:* Well, Mayor, do you have those statistics in your pocket?

*Mayor Rokach:* I am very weak in statistics, and secondly don't believe in statistics. Thirdly, I think there are only few who have left for commercial reasons, or for diplomatic purposes. The others, I think, are so few that it is not worth while to keep an employee to take down their number in figures. (*Applause*)

*Mr. Denny:* Thank you. This gentleman who has been following the Seminar regularly has some information to add.

*Man:* This question was asked yesterday morning at the Seminar, and one of the replies given by the immigration expert at the Jewish Agency was that the majority of the people who have left during this last period are people who came here from Shanghai—people for whom Israel was only a transit camp. If we helped them in any way on their way onwards, God be with them!

*Mr. Denny:* Thank you. Now on the other side of the hall.

*Lady:* Mr. Voss mentioned that immigrants without specific trades or incurables would be better off in their countries of origin. What about the reviving talk of Germany, Poland, or certain other countries?

*Mr. Voss:* I take it for granted that these immigrants who are incurable or too hopelessly diseased to be of any help to the State of Israel will be well taken care of not only by a group such as the American Distribution Committee, but also under the care of the other nations. If we haven't learned that much after these years of horror, then I'm afraid the whole thing is hopeless. I am convinced though that it is not hopeless.

*Mr. Denny:* Thank you. Now, Dr. Briggs, president of Lion International.

*Dr. Briggs:* Absorptive capacity has been variously interpreted to us. Please tell us, Mayor, just what is your capacity?

*Mayor Rokach:* Well, the capacity is the number of Jews who are waiting to enter Palestine. I think it is about the number of Jews who are now in Eastern Europe and Western Europe and, as we were told before, a part of the Jews from the United States who are waiting to come into this country.

*Mr. Denny:* Mr. Mayor, is that in terms of numbers—one million, two million, three million—how many? Five million?

*Mayor Rokach:* I told you that I was weak in figures and statistics, but I think Israel could contain about four million inhabitants. (*Applause*)

*Mr. Denny:* Thank you. Now we have a figure there. Now the gentleman over here on the balcony.

n: Mr. Bilby, what do you propose should be done for those verished in Europe who wish to come to Israel but who would cluded by this regulation of immigration?

*Bilby:* Well, first, the important thing to realize is that the bulk of the most desperate cases have now reached Israel. Goldstein, the secretary of the Jewish Agency, just returned Germany, says that in September—by next month—all of camps in Germany will be cleared out. Now, in the immi- on that is planned for the next six months and a little further l of that, the immigration is not coming from Europe. That em is basically pretty much licked with the exception of the Curtain countries, such as in Rumania, where they are red and where you can't get them out.

ur immigration now is coming from Asia, a great percentage and this question of Europe is not so vital as it once was.

*Denny:* Thank you. Now the gentleman back in the aisle.

n: Mr. Horowitz. How can Israel compare with colonial ica in the light of the natural wealth of the country and in nditions and the attitudes of the immigrants that are coming d work?

*Horowitz:* I did not compare at all the natural resources of ica and the natural resources of Israel. What I compare pessimistic view of absorptive capacity which appears even que if you compare it with that period of time. The point at this richest region of the world found in these few hun- mmigrants of that time pessimists who didn't believe they be absorbed. They believed that the absorptive capacity of ica wasn't sufficient for a few hundred and they returned gland.

idea was in this comparison to show how erroneous can be imates of absorptive capacity made in advance. Absorptive ty is a function not only of natural resources but just as of human material and its quality; the function of skill, l, zeal, and grim determination to make good.

*Denny:* Thank you. Mr. Voss has a comment.

*Voss:* I think it should be pointed out that in this country ave the greatest treasure in the world—mainly that of . That's why we're asking for this regulation—not exclu- ut regulation—of immigration. You have the brains ranging the pioneers who have settled in the Negeb and in the ese border all the way to the scientists of the Weizmann te. Those brains, I think, Mr. Horowitz, will be the best ce you have, especially in helping raise the standard of

living, not only in the Israel, but in the Arab countries as well.  
(Applause)

*Mr. Denny:* Thank you. Mr. Walter White has a question.

*Mr. White:* About Dr. Voss' estimate that two billions of dollars is necessary, I would like to ask Mr. Horowitz where Israel hopes to get the two billions.

*Mr. Denny:* Mr. Horowitz, as Minister of Finance, that's a fair question for you.

*Mr. Horowitz:* The estimate, of course, is an estimate for a long period of time, and is based on absorption of something like a million immigrants. If we don't fix the time, it's very difficult to predict from what sources, in what exact proportion the two billion dollars will come into the country.

My idea is that it will come mainly from three sources. The first is gifts from the nations of all Jewry which have to shoulder part of the responsibility for absorption of these immigrants. That is a Jewish responsibility, and not only Israel's responsibility. Second, through international loans and other commercial loans such as that obtained from the Export-Import Bank and others which will follow; and, third, through investment of private capital flowing in an increasing stream into this country and being invested here in order to provide asylum and an avenue for the future for the many Jews who have unused capital and want to settle in Israel.

*Mr. Denny:* Thank you, Mr. Horowitz. Well, I see here in this audience a very distinguished gentleman who has participated in these programs many times in the United States. I don't know how he's kept silent while all this was going on. He's a distinguished American Ambassador to the State of Israel, Mr. James G. McDonald. Mr. McDonald, a comment or a question will be welcomed. (Applause)

*Mr. McDonald:* Well, it would be improper, I think, for me to ask a question. What I should like to do would be to express our thanks for the Town Hall coming here, and to express, on my behalf, and I think on behalf of my government, our appreciation of the wonderful coöperation which everyone in Israel has given and particularly to the Mayor and to his assistant, here in Tel Aviv. (Applause)

*Mr. Denny:* Thank you, Mr. McDonald, and may I return the compliment. Now, while our speakers prepare their summaries of tonight's discussion, here's a special message of interest to you.

*Mr. Hansen:* This is Bob Hansen, again, speaking for the World Town Hall Seminar group that came to Tel Aviv to discuss with the people here the problems and progress of this newest land. We



and with scientists and farmers and engineers and city workers. We found them just like folk the world around, wanting only peace and freedom, some measure of security and opportunity, and not war.

Some of their problems we have been discussing this evening, but listening will not be enough. America's world leadership must rest on the foundation of year-around interest and average-understanding. So we hope that the folk back home will give increasing attention to discussion, debates, and programs that will increase the people-to-people understanding.

The problems seem many and the solutions difficult, we recommend the Israeli motto, "If you will it, it need not remain a problem."

Now we return you to Mr. Denny for the summaries.

*Denny:* We'll take our first summary from Dr. Voss.

*Voss:* If the United Nations Security Council thwarts Arab aggression and rebukes the British for their imperialist machinations in this area, Israel might then be able to keep immigration low and not have to divert strength and resources to war. Then the United Nations could provide, in the event of peace in the Middle East, financial help for Israel from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, offer medical assistance in the World Health Organization, and make this issue really a world problem—not just a Jewish problem. If prospects for peace fade, because the UN is ineffective and such help is denied, then I'm afraid Israel faces the prospect of having to limit its immigration.

*Denny:* Thank you, Dr. Voss. Now, Mayor Rokach, may we hear your summary please?

*Mayor Rokach:* As a member of a family who has been here for many years, I've seen the development of the country and heard from my forefathers of what it was at the beginning. So that I am only relatively impressed by the doubts expressed by my colleagues here that there is need of regulation of immigration. I am certain that my children and grandchildren will see around them millions of Jews in this country and be proud, as we are, of the development of the State of Israel. (*Applause*)

*Denny:* Thank you, Mayor Rokach. Now, Mr. Kenneth

*Bilby:* The great pressing immigration problem during the early stage of Israel's existence was to clear the camps of Europe. Initially, that task has now been accomplished. Now, in the second phase, the great job is to fit these people into a new life with homes, employment, educational opportunities, and proper

institutional care. That can be done only if the great immigration wave is curtailed for the present.

*Mr. Denny:* Thank you, Mr. Bilby. Now, Mr. Horowitz, your last words, please.

*Mr. Horowitz:* Restriction of immigration by law would be repugnant to the people of Israel against the background of the struggle for immigration for so many years. Immigration is self-regulating, and adapts itself naturally to economic conditions. Immigration as a driving creative force can be relied upon to stimulate the expansion of the country. The suffering of people here has more purpose and sense and isn't greater than in the countries of their origin.

Every effort will be made to condition economic and political factors to improve their position. This is a better solution of the problem than the restriction of immigration. (*Applause*)

*Mr. Denny:* Thank you, Mr. Horowitz, Kenneth Bilby, Dr. Chaim Herman Voss, and Mayor Israel Rokach. Thanks, too, to our interrogators, Mr. Hansen and Mr. Wilson, and to our audience for asking those very useful questions that helped our understanding of this question.

Our warm thanks go, too, to our host committee, and to Mr. Richard Tetley, the strong right arm of the American Ambassador here for his excellent help.

As usual, copies of tonight's discussion may be obtained by sending 10 cents to Town Hall, New York 18, New York, asking for a copy of the program from Tel Aviv. By special arrangements we've been able to make with our publishers, we're going to bind all 12 of these Round-the-World Town Meetings from world capitals into one volume for one dollar, so if you'd like to have the entire series, including this one, enclose one dollar and send to the same address, Town Hall, New York 18, New York.

Now next week, we cross the Mediterranean to Northern Africa to the land of Egypt and the City of Cairo, to consider the question "Does the Arab World Need a Marshall Plan?" Our speakers will be Saba Habashy Pacha, former Minister of Commerce and Industry; Hussein Kamel Selim Bey, dean of the faculty of Commerce at Fuad University; Dr. John S. Badeau, president of the American University of Cairo; and Dr. Clarence Decker, president of the University of Kansas City, and member of our Town Hall World Seminar. So plan now to be with us next week and every week at the sound of the crier's bell. (*Applause*)